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Soweto, Robben Island on Hillary's agenda

By Rich Mkhondo
Star Foreign Service

Washington - Hillary Clinton and her daughter, Chelsea, arrive in Johannesburg on Tuesday morning.

They will spend the day in Soweto and then travel to Cape Town on Wednesday. While in Cape Town, from Wednesday to Friday, she will meet President Mandela, who will accompany her to Robben Island.

She will attend a tree-planting ceremony with Archbishop Desmond Tutu to symbolise reconciliation and speak at the University of Cape Town on the growing importance of US-South Africa relations.

At a women's conference in Washington this week, she praised economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa and urged Americans to invest in the continent's emerging democracies.

"Africa is growing economically, moving from their suffocating state-controlled economies, to open markets that can give full life and scope to human endeavours. Last year no fewer than 30 countries recorded positive economic growth," she said of her trip to South Africa

and five other countries, beginning next week.

"I will be privileged to be visiting Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda and Eritrea.

"And I hope to be able to witness first hand and to highlight each country's effort to build a democracy and a strong civil society," she told the delegates.

She added: "I will focus particularly on grassroots initiatives and on efforts that affect women and children. I hope this trip will give the American people a renewed sense of the importance of our commitment to Africa," she said.

The last time she visited South Africa was in May 1994 when she attended the inauguration of President Mandela in Pretoria.

Government sources said her visit is a prelude to President Clinton's visit later this year.

The president's visit, the first by an American leader, may include a few other countries on his way to or from South Africa.

President Mandela extended the invitation to his US counterpart when he was in Washington on a state visit in October 1994.

TREFWOORDE

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